

The

Tricentennial

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 1998

Greetings!

This newsletter hopefully will meet you in the spirit of welcome as has been extended to you by this Committee. We meet every two weeks on Tuesday's at 10:00 a.m., with gatherings at the Public Library or at City Hall, whichever is most available. As you read through this newsletter, it is hoped that you appreciate the Committee's undertaking in highlighting and bringing to your attention, the greater Pass Christian Area's wonderful historic heritage. We are not competing with any other 300-year anniversary celebration activities or projects, but rather -- "We're gettin' with it!" -- both by embracing our own historic culture and by participating with other plans. Biloxi, Bay St. Louis, and other sister cities including Louisiana and Alabama, have been announcing their proposed celebrations. Through this newsletter we shall attempt to keep you apprised of all happenings of this Committee as well as those of other areas. Also, you will find announcements by our participating organizations, associations, and institutions of the areas which include Pass Christian, the Isles, Henderson Point, DeLisle, Vidalia, Cuevas, Pineville, and any other coastal turf that wishes to co-join with us.

This publication welcomes all comments by its readers. If there is an historical vignette that you wish to contribute, please send it in. If there is a question regarding a particular fact or myth of our history, we shall submit the query to our "Historians Committee" who may have the answer for you. If there is a point of history offered by this publication that you take issue with, please submit your comments and suggestions.

"Kick-Off" Meeting

For Thursday, April 2, 1998, your Committee is arranging a *"Kick-Off" Dinner Meeting*. Co-chairing the Kick-Off functions are Ken Austin, Tracy Gordon Goff and Peggy Johnson. The gala event is scheduled for the St. Paul Gymnasium on Scenic Drive at 6:00 p.m. They have requested County Sheriff Joe Price's Culinary Staff to be on hand to provide heavy hors d'ouvres. The Entertainment Committee is talking about having the Pass Christian High School ensemble and an enthusiastic program M.C'd by Mayor Billy McDonald. The purpose of the gathering will be to announce proposed projects and events for the 1999 Tricentennial celebrations. This will be your opportunity to meet the wonderful volunteers who have been representing our area communities for the past four months in making plans and arrangements for a wonderful, heritage oriented 1999.

Our Mission

- * To celebrate the Tricentennial (300 years) of the founding of the Louisiana Colony in 1699 by the LeMoyne brothers, d'Iberville and Bienville.
- * To promote educational programs that would support the appreciation of community heritage including early colonization periods of French, English, and Spanish; the period of the Independent Republic of West Florida; the early American governance and antebellum period; the Civil War; the Confederacy, Reconstruction; and the United States of America.
- * To emphasize the landmark communities, rivers, and waterways that compose the greater Pass Christian Area.
- * To engender a renewed appreciation of Pride, Cultural Awareness, and Community Spirit.

Attention Readers

This is your newsletter, this is your Tricentennial, this is your charge to participate and celebrate, this is your Committee as represented by volunteers of all or most organizations and areas in greater Pass Christian. Let us know what your ideas are by writing direct, calling direct, or contacting those members of the **Steering Committee** whom you know, or want to know. Meetings are open to the public and guests are most welcome.

If your name or address, or if you are receiving multiple copies, or if you know of someone who would like to be included in our mailing distribution, please call 452-3138, 453-4224 or write to POB 354.

Above all, we want you to enjoy reading *The Tricentennial* and hope that you share it with a non-subscriber.

Tally Ho, now let's go forth!

Historians Committee

- * Adele Bielenberg
- * Billy Bourdin
- * Betty Carlin
- * Hugh Griffon
- * J.J. Hayden
- * Rand Jones
- * Horace Labat
- * Roland Martin
- * Gloria Moran

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Attention Businesses

A certain amount of space will be made available in each of our publication releases. If you would like to place a one or two column inch promotion, please contact any member of the Editorial Staff as listed. If you would like to have a few extra copies of this newsletter for distribution to your customers, this can be arranged.

Sub-Committees

There are a number of sub-committees and more being proposed as we move along. Please make every effort to partake in any one or more that you feel is of your interest. Such as: Flag Committee, Finance Committee, Fund Raising Committee, Publicity Committee, Education Committee, Research Committee, Historic Markers Committee, Historians Committee, Special Projects Committees to be announced as each project or event is proposed.

State Charter

The Tricentennial Committee was authorized by the Board of Aldermen of the City of Pass Christian on September 9, 1997 and was it was incorporated on January 22, 1998.

Elected Officers

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Dan Ellis | Chairman |
| A.C. Smith | Vice-Chairman |
| Dayton Robinson | Treasurer |

The Steering Committee decided to fill these positions immediately and to fill other provided for vacancies as we progress. Vacancies exist for three more Vice Chairmen, a Recording Secretary, and a Correspondence Secretary. The reason for holding off on filling all positions was to allow more people to get involved who may not have been made aware of our on-going meetings. Come aboard!



History of Mardi Gras

by Adele Bielenberg

Carnival as celebrated in New Orleans begins officially with the ball of the Twelfth night Revelers, twelve nights after Christmas and reaches its height on Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday.

The word Mardi Gras is the French for Fat Tuesday, the day of feasting before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

The word Carnival comes from two Latin terms which mean meat and farewell and signifies a short time before those of many faiths don sack cloth and ashes bidding a forty days farewell to meat during lent.

The first recorded Carnival in New Orleans was in 1827 when a group of Parisian taught sons of rich planters returned home and duplicated the festive French occasions with parading and masking.

The balls however, preceded the street celebrations. They began in Colonial times and are believed to have started shortly after the founding of New Orleans in 1718. The Celebration was then called, "Soiree du Roi" or Kings Party and was held in private homes twelve nights after Christmas with the guests cutting a cake called a King's Cake.

Mardi Gras in New Orleans is a spirit, as well as a day, and one of the world's greatest free shows. To quote from Robert Tallant, "Mardi Gras is very old, but it is very young. It belongs to the past, yet also to the present and the future. The face it wears now is not necessarily its last. It will exist in other forms, in other times, in other places. "It would be wonderful if the clown in the grinning mask should appear on all the main streets of the world; if the blazing flambeau and the rocking floats were everywhere; if everywhere there could be a season, or at least a day devoted to laughter."

The Mardi Gras of 1872 is one of the most important in the history of the event. It

is the year in which the Russian Grand Duke Alexis Romanoff outshone the most glittering pageant. For his visit, the King of Carnival Rex came into being, also the Carnival colors of green, purple, and gold, and the Carnival theme song, "If ever I cease to Love" was adopted." Alexis had been captivated by the song as sung by the actress Lydia Thompson in Bluebeard so it was set to march time for Rex and became the official Mardi Gras tune, attaining immortality.

There are many Kings and Queens of Carnival organizations but there is only one King of Carnival, His Majesty Rex.

Rex reigns on Mardi Gras from his Royal float, leading his parade through the streets of New Orleans to the applause of the yelling crowds who eagerly await the trinkets generously thrown by his krewe. City streets are turned into a playground for the population and visitors as the hilarious maskers take over, losing all identity behind their bizarre costumes. When the parade finally reaches Canal Street, Rex rests before the Boston Club to exchange toasts with Her Majesty the Queen of Carnival, who awaits him on the Boston Club gallery. The parade later moves on as the chief event in a full day of glittering pageantry.

On Mardi Gras night Rex and his Court hold their traditional ball and at midnight after much revelry, their Majesties with sweeping gestures, bid adieu to their many guests and depart for the meeting with their majesties the King and Queen of Comus. Together the two courts and their majesties participate in a grand march before the guests to the bewitching theme song "If ever I cease to Love" bringing New Orleans' Mardi Gras to a grand finale.

* * *



Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville

by Grace King

D'Iberville was the son of Charles Le Moyne, of Dieppe, Normandy, one of the earliest and most noted settlers of Canada. He was one of nine brothers, all of whom distinguished themselves working and fighting for their country. Of all the nine, Iberville was the most glorious as founding father of the French Claim to the Mississippi Valley and Louisiana Territory.

Before he was fourteen, he had become a good sailor by cruising in a vessel of his father's in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. After that he voyaged on the Atlantic, sailing with skillful navigators, to and fro, between Canada and France. Strong, active, daring and handsome, he never failed to please his superiors; and there seemed no enterprise on land or sea perilous enough to daunt him. His most famous exploits were against the English in Hudson's Bay and on the coast of Newfoundland. In canoe or in snow shoes, brandishing gun, hatchet or cutlass, he was always in front of his hardy band of Canadians and allied Indians. From 1686, until 1697, he was the hero of one brilliant action after another, until his name in the reports from Canada to France became the sure sign of French victory and English defeat.

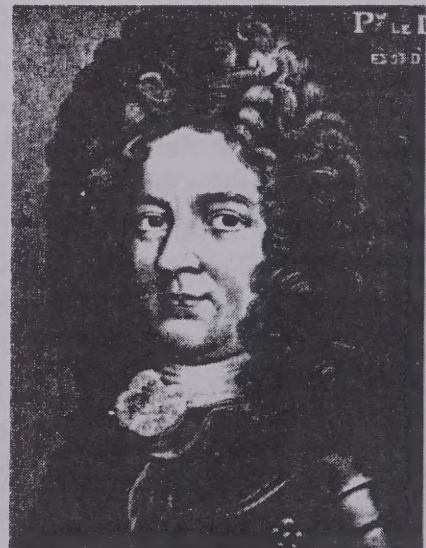
Therefore, when Maurepas sent for Iberville and confided to him the mission of completing La Salle's work, he well knew that his man was one who had never disappointed expectations of a friend or a foe.

He was charged with transporting a colonial expedition to open river communications from the mouth of the Mississippi to Canada and to build forts at the mouths of all the important streams emptying into the Mississippi.

Two frigates, the *Badine* and *Marin*, were fitted and manned with a picked crew; and two freight ships were purchased and filled generously with stores of ammunition, arms, provisions, presents for the Indians, etc. Iberville himself, selected the men, tried and tested the arms, and examined the provisions and presents for the Indians. For in all his enterprises Iberville never left anything to the chance of another man's sense of duty.

Everything being completed on the morning of the 24th of October 1698, Iberville fired the signal from his frigate, the *Badine*, and led the way out of the harbor of Brest, followed by the Count de Surgeres in the *Marin*; the heavily loaded freight ships sailed slower behind them.

* * * * *



More on d'Iberville

There are several books available, but one in particular, describes d'Iberville's three journeys to the New World. It is a translation of his own stories of his arrival, seeking the Mississippi River, explorations, and Fort constructions. These are revealed in "D'Iberville's Journals", which is available in the libraries of Pass Christian and Long Beach, as well as Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis.

* * * * *

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Trinity Church

Dayton Robinson 452-4543 965 E. Beach Blvd

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Julia Cerra 452-4456 408 E. Second Street

Club Alert!

If your organization, association, church, school, or area is not represented, please make every effort to have a representative selected to join our Steering Committee as listed. If you have specific requests for further information please contact any Steering Committee member, officer, or Editorial staff-member. We are striving to have representation from all quarters involved.

Budget and Finance

Treasurer's Report

A 1998 Base Budget was established by a committee headed by Treasurer Dayton Robinson which would ascribe to the costs of a newsletter, printing, postage, distribution, and a post office box. As a start-up cost for these budgeted items, existing participating organizations were asked to support the endeavor with \$25 or \$50 or more if they could respond. As of this date, the Friends of the Library contributed \$500, the City of Pass Christian contributed \$500, the Henderson Point/Pass Isles Association contributed \$25, and a very thoughtful donation of \$100 was tendered by Ms. Dorothy Row. The Committee is grateful for the donors who have heeded our call. A Treasurer's Report will be presented in designated issues of this newsletter. Your contributions are always most welcome.

Along the Coast



Biloxi's Tricentennial Commission had a chance to shine at its recent Showcase Announcements of raising \$1,043,000.00 to celebrate its two-year bonanza of events. Lisa Michiels, Executive Director, gave enthusiastic acclaim to the line of Volunteers and paid special tribute to the "Class of 2000" students who are aggressively learning their heritage.

Bay St. Louis's Tercentennial Committee has commissioned a statue of Bienville with support of Hancock Bank. Hancock Bank will be celebrating its centennial year during the 1999 activities and has rendered the plaza adjoining its first bank at Beach Boulevard and Main Street as the site for the statue.



Our Tricentennial

Leo Chipper McDermott, Alderman at Large, and a fourth generation descendant of pioneer settlers of the Pass, stresses the significance of the Tricentennial. "The history of Pass Christian is the most colorful of the coastal cities and my family, both paternal and maternal sides, have been major players in the formation of the Pass. This history has been paved with the blood, sweat and tears of all the diversified people from each distinct culture. The Blacks, the white, the rich, and the poor, have all added to the charm that we know as nature's gift to the Gulf Coast.

Club Notes

* The Historical Society recently had famed Pass Historians present an excellent symposium on the area's historic moments. These were taped and will be the foundation for a History Book that the Society will be publishing.

* Boy Scout Troop #316 will perfect their culinary arts at a Breakfast prepared by the Scouts on Sunday, March 15th at Trinity Parish Hall. This is a fundraiser to purchase an equipment trailer.

* The Krewe of Blarney invites Pass residents to get out their "Green" sashes and umbrellas to strut down Scenic Drive in its annual one-and-only Walking Parade. Scheduled for Sunday, March 15, the revelry will start up at 12:30 p.m. at Memorial Park, to be lead by the VFW color-bearers and banner-carrying Boy Scouts. Lively music by the Pass High Band, Grand Marshall Scottie Cuevas and his entourage of City Hall VIP's will distribute the customary green, white and orange flowers. The Ladies from various clubs are organizing their own "Second-Line" umbrella swingers to add to the hallelujah.



Contests

Our Tricentennial is in need of a Logo to herald in our year of '99. Janie Koch, of the Pass Art Association, an accomplished winner of several coast-wide Logo and Poster contests, urges the Committee formulate guidelines for a contest to bring out the talents of the area in competing for the best representation and symbol for the Pass. Details will be forthcoming.

Profile

Adele Marie Bielenberg

Miss Bielenberg demonstrated early in life her zeal and passion for children. Following her graduation from Pass High School as valedictorian in 1924, she enrolled at nearby Gulf Park College in Long Beach in quest of her teaching career.

In 1929, she received her BS Degree from Mississippi Southern's State Teacher's College in Hattiesburg and later, attended graduate school at Tulane and Southern Mississippi.

She served as Principal of Pass Christian Elementary School while continuing as fourth grade teacher.

She organized the first registered Girl Scout troop in the Pass and remained its Leader for 14 years.

She was presented a Lifetime Certificate in the Mississippi Parent Teacher Association in recognition of her outstanding service to school and community.

Upon retirement in 1970, after 43 years of public education, she was drafted to serve as principal for St. Paul's Interparochial School.

On Community Service Day in April of 1976, a Redbud tree was planted in Memorial Park by the VFW and its Auxiliary honoring Miss Bielenberg at special ceremonies upon her soon to be completed six years at St. Paul. The St. Paul Parishioners gave her a reception and a plaque. She was also given a gold watch by the P.T.O. of the school in commemorating her 49 years of dedicated educational leadership.

Never ceasing her activity, she continued with community projects, such as: the 1976 Bicentennial Committee, visiting patients and residents of nursing homes and hospitals, keeping in touch with shut-ins by phone, and a volunteer with the American Cancer Association.

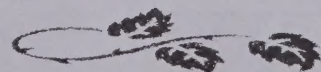
The Pass Christian Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce recognized her contributions to the community by honoring her as the City's Outstanding Citizen for 1990 at its annual banquet.

The Tricentennial recognizes Miss Bielenberg with further tribute and acknowledgement. It is so good to know such a wonderful, warm, wholesome, and dedicated person.

Collector's Item

We feel so good about our newsletter that we truthfully look upon it as a collector's item, not just because this one is Vol. 1, Issue 1, but because it will go out of print at the end of 1999. With only 10 months left in '98, every issue promises to bring you an update on the history and heritage of the Pass Christian Area and its people. Not only those who will make the celebration of our Tricentennial a success, but to all the wonderful people who have made the area what it is. Have you ever stopped to wonder what folks were like when they built some of the old homes along Beach Boulevard? Did you ever wonder how some of the streets got their names? Did you know that before this area was called Pass Christian it was reported on old French maps as *Passe aux Huîtres*, which means Oyster Pass? Did you know that the largest Live Oak on the Coast, larger than the one at USM in Long Beach, was located in the Pass until the 1950's? With the help of our local historians, many of the little somethings as well as the big events will be produced in these pages.

Volume II will begin with January 1999 and end with December 1999. Every issue will be a keepsake. The distribution is limited and we are so wonderfully happy to have you on our mailing list. Without you, we would be the drop of rain at the end of a rainbow, never heard and never seen. But, because of you, Pass Christian and the surrounding communities will be a continuing thread of history, much as we all are spirited representatives of our forebears.



PASS CHRISTIAN, MS

The

Tricentennial

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Pass Christian, MS 39571

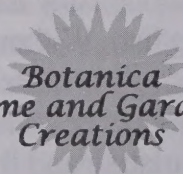
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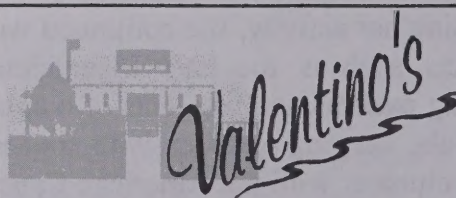
Pass Christian, MS

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